

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2248 without my signature.

While I strongly support the Reading First program, this bill does not adequately address the concerns that I stated in my veto message included in item 6110-126-0890 of the Budget Act of 2006. In my veto message I stated that I would support legislation that extended the availability of funding for the existing cohorts for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years. This bill limits the availability of funding for the existing cohorts to 2007-08, which only ensures funding for the sixth year to cohort one and would result in cohort four only being eligible to receive three years of funding. My Administration has continuously advocated that to the extent the federal funds remain available, school districts that are successfully implementing the Reading First program should be able to participate in the program for six years in order to make the school-wide permanent cultural changes to reading instruction.

Further, this bill attempts to create an accountability system for the Reading First program. However, because this bill is technically flawed, it is likely that this bill would only cause confusion at the local level and not result in any further accountability. Moreover, the federal government has already set accountability requirements for this program so it is redundant and unnecessary to have an accountability process at the state level as well.

Therefore, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger